

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00

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P R 231923Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2881

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USMISSION NATO

DIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 2921

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PO

SUBJ: POLITICAL SITUATION

REF: (A) LISBON 2890; (B) LISBON 2891

SUMMARY: THE PRINCIPAL PROTAGONISTS HAVE REACHED AN IMPASSE. THE REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL HAS CRITICIZED THE SOCIALISTS AND WARNED THAT IT WILL NOT ALLOW ANY POLITICAL PARTY TO SET ITSELF UP AS AN INTERMEDIARY BETWEEN THE AFM AND THE PEOPLE. THE COMMUNISTS ARE POSITIONING THEMSELVES ON THE SIDE OF THE AFM, THE REVOLUTION, AND THE PEOPLE. THE PCP HAS CALLED INTO QUESTION THE CONVENING OF THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY IF PS DOES NOT STAY IN THE COALITION GOVERNMENT. END SUMMARY

1. SOCIALIST RALLY: A CROWD ESTIMATED AT 40,000-50,000 TURNED OUT ON EVENING MAY 22 IN RESPONSE TO THE SOCIALIST PARTY CALL FOR A SHOW OF STRENGTH (REF A). THE DEMONSTRATION DEMANDED INCREASED SOCIALIST INFLUENCE IN THE GOVERNMENT AND AN END TO
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THE GRADUAL EROSION OF PS POWER. DEMONSTRATORS WERE LED BY SOARES, ZENHA, NUMEROUS OTHER SOCIALIST LEADERS, AND SEVERAL

JOURNALISTS FROM THE SHUT-DOWN REPUBLICA, REGO AMONG THEM. THOUGH THE MARCHERS WERE MAINLY SOCIALISTS, THERE WERE ALSO MANY PPD AND PPM MEMBERS. THE PPD PASSED OUT LEAFLETS PRIOR TO THE RALLY STATING THAT THE REPUBLICA CRISIS WAS "GREATER THAN ANY PARTY" AND URGING ITS MEMBERS TO MARCH WITH THE SOCIALISTS BUT NOT TO DISPLAY PPD FLAGS OR EMBLEMS. THE PCP (M-L) TOOK A SIMILAR STAND.

2. SOARES SPOKE TO CROWD ABOUT THE REPUBLICA PROBLEM AND CALLED FOR LIBERTY OF THE PRESS. THE BULK OF THE SPEECH, HOWEVER, CONSISTED OF A DESCRIPTION OF THE DISCRIMINATION AGAINST THE SOCIALIST PARTY WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT AND AN ATTACK UPON THE COMMUNIST PARTY. HE CALLED ON THE AFM TO LIVE UP TO ITS PROMISES OF SOCIALISM AND MULTI-PARTY DEMOCRACY, STATING THAT THE PS HAD LIVED UP TO ITS AGREEMENTS. HE STRESSED THAT THE SOCIALIST PARTY HAS THE SUPPORT OF THE MAJORITY OF THE PORTUGUESE PEOPLE AND NOTED THAT THE AFM HAS REPEATEDLY STATED THAT IT WANTS TO GOVERN WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE MAJORITY OF THE PEOPLE. "DOES IT NOW WANT TO GOVERN," HE ASKED, "AGAINST THE MAJORITY OF THE PEOPLE?" IN CLOSING, AFTER SPEAKING OF THE REACTIONARY DANGERS IN MADEIRA, THE AZORES, AND IN ANGOLA, AND URGING THE CROWD NOT TO RESORT TO VIOLENCE, SOARES EXCLAIMED, "WE HAVE TO SAVE THIS COUNTRY*"

3. REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL RESPONDS: IN A COMMUNIQUE ISSUED IN THE EARLY MORNING HOURS, THE REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL MADE IT CLEAR THAT IT REGARDED THE ACTIONS BY THE SOCIALISTS AS A CLEAR CHALLENGE TO ITS AUTHORITY. THE COMMUNIQUE APPEALED FOR NATIONAL UNITY TO GET ON WITH THE TASK OF RECONSTRUCTION AND THE "BATTLE FOR PRODUCTION." IT CRITICIZED CONTINUED SPECULATION REGARDING THE REPUBLICA AFFAIR, WHICH IT SAID HAD BEEN GIVEN MORE ATTENTION THAN IT MERITED WITH CONSEQUENT DAMAGE TO THE COUNTRY'S PRESTIGE. IT POINTEDLY REMINDED ALL CONCERNED THAT THE DEFENSE OF DEMOCRATIC LIBERTIES WAS NOT THE RESPONSIBILITY OF ANY SINGLE POLITICAL PARTY BUT RATHER THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE AFM AND ALL THE PORTUGUESE PEOPLE. THE STATEMENT CONCLUDED WITH A WARNING THAT THE AFM WOULD NOT ACCEPT ATTEMPTS BY ANY POLITICAL PARTY OR PARTIES (READ PS AND/OR PCP) TO SET THEMSELVES UP AS EXCLUSIVE INTERMEDIARIES BETWEEN THE AFM AND THE PEOPLE.

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4. PCP COMMENTS: THE COMMUNISTS ISSUED A COMMUNIQUE MAY 22 IN WHICH THEY ATTEMPTED TO LINK THEMSELVES WITH THE AFM AND THE PEOPLE AS THE TRUE DEFENDERS OF THE REVOLUTION AND TO ASSOCIATE THE SOCIALISTS WITH "REACTION." THEY ACCUSED THE SOCIALISTS OF "A VAST AND HYSTERICAL ACTION" DIRECTED AGAINST THE REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL, THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT, THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS, THE REVOLUTIONARY FORCES, AND THE AFM ITSELF. THEY STATED THAT THE SOCIALISTS, BY THEIR ACTIONS, ARE CONVERTING THEMSELVES INTO AN OPPOSITION PARTY. THEY ASSERTED THAT THE SOCIALIST PARTY IS NOT

COMPLYING WITH THE COMMITMENTS WHICH THEY (AND THE OTHER PARTIES) ENTERED INTO WITH THE AFM PRIOR TO THE ELECTIONS. THE STATEMENT CONCLUDED BY THREATENING THAT IF THE SOCIALISTS DESTROY THE COALITION GOVERNMENT, THERE WOULD BE LITTLE REASON FOR CONVENING THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY.

5. PRESS REACTION: PRESS PLAY ON INTERNATIONAL REACTIONS: LISBON'S TWO COMMUNIST-LINING MORNING NEWSPAPERS (SECULO, DIARIO DE NOTICIAS) BOTH GAVE FRONT PAGE PLAY TO REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL'S COMMUNIQUE, WHICH CONTAINED A PASSAGE NOTING EMBARRASSING COMMENTS WHICH THE REPUBLICA CASE HAS ENGENDERED ABROAD. SECULO QUOTED COMMENTS FROM L'HUMANITE (ON LESSONS THE PS LEADERSHIP HAS TO LEARN) AND REFERRED DISPARAGINGLY TO THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF JOURNALISTS' STATEMENT ABOUT LIMITATIONS ON PRESS FREEDOM IN PORTUGAL. DIARIO DE NOTICIAS GAVE INCONSPICUOUS TREATMENT TO EXPRESSIONS OF SOLIDARITY WITH PS BY WILLY BRANDT AND AUSTRIAN SOCIALISTS. NEITHER PAPER REFERRED TO CRITICISM OF ATTEMPTED REPUBLICA TAKEOVER APPEARING IN ITALIAN COMMUNIST PAPER UNITA, WHICH AFTERNOON JORNAL NOVO, NOW THE ONLY NON-COMMUNIST-LINING DAILY, BANNERED UNDER LEAD "POSITION OF ITALIAN PC."

6. MORE ON THE RAL-1 AFFAIR: COPCON YESTERDAY ISSUED A BRIEF OFFICIAL STATEMENT PROVIDING FURTHER DETAILS ON THE EVENTS OF THE PAST WEEKEND. ACCORDING TO THE ANNOUNCEMENT, A TOTAL OF TWENTY-ONE PERSONS, INCLUDING ONE WOMAN, HAVE BEEN DETAINED IN THE CONTINUING INVESTIGATIONS. THE STATEMENT NOTED THAT GROUPS OF COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARY ACTIVISTS ARE LOCATED IN SPAIN, WHERE THEY RECEIVE TRAINING BY MERCENARIES ON PRIVATELY-OWNED ESTATES. OTHER GROUPS ARE SAID TO BE LOCATED IN FRANCE. THE STATEMENT IMPLICATED JAIME COELHO DA SILVA AND MARCELINO DA MATA IN THE
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ACTIVITIES OF THESE GROUPS, BUT STATED OTHER PRISONERS CANNOT BE NAMED FOR FEAR OF DAMAGING THE CONTINUING INVESTIGATION OF THE PLOT.

7. COMMENT: THE REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL AND THE SOCIALISTS HAVE ARRIVED AT AN UNEASY IMPASSE. THE COMMUNISTS, BY IDENTIFYING THEMSELVES WITH THE AFM AND THE REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL, ARE ATTEMPTING TO DISCREDIT THE SOCIALISTS AS ENEMIES OF THE REVOLUTION.

8. THE PCP WARNING ABOUT NOT CONVENING THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY IS CONSISTENT WITH THE RECENT SHIFT IN THE PARTY'S LINE (REF B) AND UPS THE ANTE CONSIDERABLY FOR THE SOCIALISTS.
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